

this wall; and I would say to you Mr. President, take down the chains. Take down the walls to these open-air memorials to freedom. This is not the National Archives where things could be taken or stolen. These are open-air memorials. This is ridiculous political gamesmanship. I was Governor for eight years. I have been an executive. I know that you can do this, and I would ask that you do so.

I am going to go for my evening run, 5:30, 6 o'clock. I would invite every one of you all up there in the gallery to come join me at the Lincoln Memorial. I would ask listeners out there to join me at the Lincoln Memorial. I will talk to Representative PALAZZO from Mississippi and MICHELE BACHMANN and others who gathered there at the World War II Memorial. This has gotten out of control with regard to this degree of political gamesmanship by HARRY REID and by the President.

So I would just ask that you take another look at that picture, think about what it means, think about the sacrifice that has been made that is ultimately about what these memorials are founded on, and why can't we do something about it, Mr. President. I would ask you to do so.

I would invite folks for a 5:30 or 6 o'clock run down at the Lincoln Memorial.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members that they are to direct their remarks to the Chair.

HONORING GEORGE ZENOVICH AND PETE MEHAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, we have seen a great deal of political posturing and speeches over the last several days. I think it is time that we get our priorities straight and pass a clean budget that reopens this government. I think the American public is, frankly, sick and tired of the blame game.

I also believe that many of my Republican friends are distracted with issues that are important, but are not central to the question of funding government. We can debate the issue of the Affordable Health Care Act, as we should, but it is not central to reopening government.

Today, I would like to talk to you about two public servants from my neck of the woods, the San Joaquin Valley, who put their community first and delivered results. Sadly, in the last week these two individuals have passed away and we say good-bye to them. But I want to use their examples as role models because I think their commitment to public service, to the people of the San Joaquin Valley in California and our Nation, is a good example. One was a Democrat and one was a Republican. Both were widely respected; and they never, ever let partisanship or ideology get in the way of solutions.

George Zenovich and Pete Mehas were the best our Valley had to offer,

especially on how they conducted their lives. Pete Mehas, from a Greek immigrant family, was a pillar of our education community in the Valley for almost 50 years. From the time he entered the classroom in 1963, he was bound for leadership and changed the lives of countless individuals. He realized the special challenges of students in our Valley and those throughout the State and he made their voices heard.

His passion was recognized by Governor George Deukmejian, who appointed him as his chief adviser relating to all matters involving education. Pete served also under Governor Pete Wilson and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and, ultimately, President George Bush when he was appointed to the advisory commission on educational excellence for all Americans.

Knowing that strong schools require strong communities, Pete wanted to see Fresno prosper and develop into a thriving business hub. From co-founding Leadership Fresno, to sitting on the Valley Business Conference Executive Board, to serving as the president of the Fresno County Athletic Hall of Fame where he was enshrined, Pete invested his time in the community and the city he loved. For 16 years he served as the superintendent of Fresno County Schools where he represented 34 school districts, 325 schools, and almost 200,000 students.

He was a loving husband, a proud father, and a distinguished alum of Fresno State. He was part of the 1961 Mercy Bowl team that was a national champion. So it is with a heavy heart that we say good-bye to this man who dedicated his life to making the future of others brighter.

Another individual whom he worked with and whom I worked with was also a pillar of our community and that was George Zenovich. George was a man who lived his life with purpose and a dedication to public service. Born in 1922 of a Slavic family, he was a product of our Valley. He served in the United States Army Air Force. He was student body president at Fresno State.

Later on he enrolled in law school after he married the love of his life, Kika. Upon completion of his degree, he quickly built a strong professional reputation and served in the California Assembly beginning in 1962. Later on he became the majority leader, before taking a seat in the California State Senate.

His impact as a senator was far-reaching, from creating the California Arts Council, to the California Housing Authority Finance Agency, to authoring the first law in the United States that gave farm workers a chance at collective bargaining through the Agricultural Labor Relations Board. He was an advocate for those voices who sometimes got lost in the political banter.

In 1979, George was appointed by Governor Jerry Brown to be on the court of appeals. In 2008, Fresno's new Fifth

District Court of Appeals building was named after him, the George Zenovich Court of Appeals Building, for his lifetime practice of fair and sound jurisprudence. George was a shining example of what a public servant should be and never lost sight of those in the community he served.

Both of these people put their community first. I worked with both George and Pete for years, and they were not only my friends, but they were friends of the Valley they loved and the State they called home, California.

My colleagues, Mr. Speaker, I think it is time for all of us in this body to live up to the memory of these two shining examples, people who we have all worked with throughout our lives, and I think in the true tradition of public service these are the kind of individuals we ought to have as role models when fixing our Nation's budget and putting government back to work.

OPEN AMERICA'S PARKS AND MEMORIALS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House passed and sent to the Senate a bipartisan bill to keep our national parks open. Twenty-three Democrats joined the House Republicans to end the closure of these national treasures. They joined us to unlock the gates and to open the doors of these treasures, from Acadia to Zion. They joined with us to tear down the barriers that were erected to block access to our open D.C. memorials that my colleague from South Carolina just alluded to a moment ago. These memorials are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. So the Senate should act today to pass this bill and to send it to the President for his signature.

But it is disappointing to see statements from Senate Democrat leaders dismissing and even ridiculing these commonsense steps as "piecemeal." It is even more disappointing that the President has threatened a veto of this bill to keep the parks open.

Mr. Speaker, let's not forget that one week ago today the Senate Democrats, led by HARRY REID, and the entire Senate, unanimously approved a bill to keep the Federal Helium Reserve open and operating, and last night the President finally signed this bill to prevent a helium shutdown into law. Now, make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Senate unanimously passed it, and I am glad the President signed the law. It is important for our economy.

But the reason I bring this up is that the helium program is part of the Department of the Interior, the Department of the Interior that is responsible for our national parks. So one has to ask, why will the Senate pass and the President sign into law a bill to specifically prevent the closure of our Federal